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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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It’s late, and this issue is, as recent history has shown, late again "hitting the streets". Sorry, I don’t plan for these things to happen, but, things happen.

So, no commentary this week, unfortunately. I just haven’t had any time to think about what to say, even though there are tons of things going on these days that deserve commentary. Perhaps in the foreseeable future! So, again, let’s move on to another issue of A-ONE!

Until next time...

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Microsoft Offers Free Xbox 360 to PC Buyers!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Xbox 720’ Slated for November 2013!
Schilling Video Game Firm Lays Off Staff!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Microsoft Offers Free Xbox 360 to PC Buyers

Microsoft is looking to bolster sales of Windows-powered computers this summer by offering students a free Xbox 360 video game console with a qualifying PC purchase. Beginning on May 18th in Canada and on May 20th in the United States, students who purchase a PC for at least $599 CAD in Canada or $699 in the U.S. will receive a free 4GB Xbox 360. Purchases must be made from participating retailers including Best Buy, Dell.com,

Fry s Electronics, HPDirect.com, Microsoft Stores and NewEgg.com in the U.S., and Best Buy, Dell.ca, Future Shop, Staples and The Source in Canada. Microsoft did not indicate when the promotion ends.

Xbox 720' Slated for November 2013 Release

Microsoft plans to launch its next-generation Xbox video game and home entertainment console ahead of the holidays next year, according to a recent report. The Los Angeles Times on Monday published a developer contract between Acitivision Blizzard and famed Halo developers Bungie. The firms are currently working on a new Massively Multiplayer Online franchise called Destiny, which will be a first-person shooter with a science fiction theme. While the fact that the companies currently have four titles planned for the series is exciting for gamers in itself, another tidbit may be even more titillating; the contract suggests that the first Destiny title will launch ahead of the holidays next year as an exclusive for Microsoft s Xbox 360 and its next-generation console, which the document refers to as the Xbox 720. An earlier report from an industry industry insider suggested that Microsoft will launch an ARM-based Xbox lite in late 2013 followed by a true Xbox 360 successor some time later, however this new information suggests that timeline may not be accurate.

Schilling Video Game Firm Lays Off Staff

The troubled video gaming company run by former Red Sox baseball great Curt Schilling seemed on the verge of collapse on Thursday and had laid off its entire staff, according to several gaming industry websites and other media.

The apparent firings by 38 Studios came days after the company, based in Providence, Rhode Island, barely made a debt repayment to the state, weeks after the money was due.

The Verge.com said 38 Studios had closed its Rhode Island office and its Maryland-based subsidiary, Big Huge Games.

WPRI, a Providence television station, said 38 Studios told its employees that they were laid off effective immediately, as the company experienced "an economic downturn."

38 Studios, formed in 2006 as the brainchild of avid gamer Schilling, had 379 full-time employees as of March 15.

The company received a $75 million taxpayer-backed loan guarantee from Rhode Island in 2010 as an incentive to move its headquarters from Massachusetts. It has received almost $50 million of those funds, according to the state.

Last week, when the company struggled to make a $1.1 million payment, it failed to meet payroll. Two top executives, including Chief Executive Officer Jen MacLean, quit this week and removed 38 Studios from their LinkedIn profiles, according to the Boston Globe.

Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee, who opposed the 38 Studios deal when he ran for office in 2010, and other state officials have had a serious of emergency meetings with Schilling over the past week.

During that time other video game companies have held job fairs in Providence to attract some of the company's embattled - and now available - workers.

Schilling, a New England sports hero who helped bring a World Series back to Boston in 2004 and has also been a prominent backer of conservative politicians, has avoided talking to the media in recent weeks.

On Tuesday, Schilling said on Facebook that his team "has shown breathtaking resilience through these incredibly challenging times."

Pledged as collateral to Rhode Island against the loan are the present and future rights to "Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning," the video game launched in February, and those to an elaborate, multi-player game code-named "Project Copernicus," which is still in development.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Facebook Shares Fall as Valuation Doubts Rise

Shares of Facebook fell again at the open on Tuesday as doubts about the company's valuation increased after Reuters reported that underwriters cut their revenue forecasts for the social networking site shortly before the IPO.

Facebook's shares hit a low of $31.73, 7.4 percent below Monday's close, and are now trading down 17.1 percent down from their $38 IPO price. The shares are down 30 percent from a high of $45 hit shortly after they started trading on Friday.

Jury: Google Didn't Infringe on Oracle Patents

A federal jury ruled Wednesday that Google didn't infringe on Oracle's patents when the Internet search leader developed its popular Android software for mobile devices.

Wednesday's verdict comes about two weeks after the same jury, with two additional members, failed to agree on a pivotal issue in Oracle's copyright-infringement case against Google. As a result, Google Inc. faced maximum damages of only $150,000 not the hundreds of millions of dollars that Oracle Corp. was seeking.

U.S. District Judge William Alsup dismissed the jury, skipping the damages phase that had been originally scheduled. Had Oracle been able to pursue damages, confidential documents detailing how much money Google makes from its Android software might have become public.

The outcome ends, for now, a showdown pitting two Silicon Valley titans in a courtroom duel that brought Oracle CEO Larry Ellison and Google CEO Larry Page to the witness stand during the 5‰-week trial.

In vindicating Google, the jury delivered a humbling setback to Oracle. The world's leading maker of database software had accused Google of building Android around Oracle's copyrighted and patented Java programming system. Oracle inherited the rights to Java in a $7.3 billion acquisition of Sun Microsystems in 2010.

During the copyright phase of the trial, the jury ruled against Google on a key question related to Java's "application programming interfaces," or APIs, that provide the blueprints for making much of the software work effectively. Although the jury found that Google infringed on those APIs, it reached an impasse on whether Google was covered under "fair use" protections in U.S. law. The lack of a fair-use determination hobbled Oracle's ability to extract huge sums from Google.

The jury found that Android infringed on nine lines of Java coding, but the penalty for that violation is confined to statutory damages no higher than $150,000.

In the second phase of the trial, the jury considered Oracle's allegations that Android violated two Java patents. The jury said Wednesday that Google had violated neither. The patent case was considered to be worth far less to Oracle than the allegations of copyright infringement.

In a statement, Google said Wednesday's verdict "was a victory not just for Google but the entire Android ecosystem." Oracle countered with a statement asserting it had "presented overwhelming evidence at trial that Google knew it would fragment and damage Java." Oracle didn't say whether it intended to appeal the jury's verdict.

Although Alsup dismissed the jury, the case still has a few potential twists.

Google has filed for a mistrial on the API ruling. Google argues that the law doesn't allow an infringement finding if the fair use question isn't answered. If mistrial is granted, the allegations could be re-examined by a new jury.

Alsup also will rule on whether the law even allows APIs to be copyrighted an issue being closely watched by computer programmers. If Alsup finds APIs can be copyrighted, Oracle could still pursue a portion of Google's Android profits, but obtaining a large award might still be difficult as long as the fair-use question is unresolved.

FBI Investigates Bomb Threat at Utah Cyber Center

A search prompted by a bomb threat at a U.S. Army base in Utah has ended with an FBI spokeswoman saying agents have not turned up anything suspicious.

FBI spokeswoman Debbie Dujanovic Bertram says the search with bomb-sniffing dogs ended late Monday, about six hours after the threat halted construction of a National Security Agency data center at Camp Williams and the site was evacuated.

Construction will resume Tuesday.

The FBI says it isn't concluding that the bomb threat was a hoax, only that agents found nothing.

The NSA broke ground on the $1.2 billion cyber security center in January.

Camp Williams is about 25 miles south of Salt Lake City.

Major Decisions Under New HP CEO Meg Whitman

Meg Whitman became CEO of Hewlett-Packard Co. in September, replacing Leo Apotheker, who was fired after less than a year on the job. Here are some major decisions under her leadership:

Oct. 27, 2011: After her predecessor flirts will selling or spinning off the PC business, HP says it will keep it after all. The company says keeping it is right for the company, its customers, shareholders and business partners.

Dec. 9: HP says that instead of selling its webOS mobile system or killing it off, it's making it available as open-source software that anyone can use and modify freely. The company is hoping more mobile apps will be developed under webOS by offering it to the open-source community.

March 21, 2012: HP says it will combine its PC and printers businesses. The move will save an unspecified amount of money as the company expects improved productivity and efficiency and streamlined customer support and supply chain. HP had combined the divisions before, but reversed that in 2005 when printers were still thriving.

Wednesday: HP announces plans to cut 27,000 jobs, or about 8 percent of its work force, by October 2014. The company expects to save as much as $3.5 billion annually from the job cuts and other austerity measures. HP plans to funnel most of the savings into developing more products and services that could help the company adapt to technological shifts, including growth in mobile computing and in software provided over the Internet, rather than individual computers.

New Google Data Show Microsoft's Piracy Problems

Google's Internet search engine receives more complaints about websites believed to be infringing on Microsoft's copyrights than it does about material produced by entertainment companies pushing for tougher online piracy laws.

A snapshot of Microsoft's apparently chronic copyright headaches emerged in new data that Google released Thursday to provide a better

understanding of the intellectual property abuses on the Internet.

Google has a good vantage point on the issue because it operates the Internet's dominant search engine with the largest index of websites. About 97 percent of the copyright removal requests sent to Google are found to be valid by the company, prompting the offending links to be blocked from its influential search results.

The new report includes a breakdown of all requests Google has received since July 2011 to remove copyright-infringing content from its search index. Google plans to update the information daily at: http://www.google.com/transparencyreport/removals/copyright .

Google Inc. has logged more than 2.5 million requests in the past 11 months to remove links believed to be violating Microsoft's copyrights. That ranked well above second-place NBC Universal, the operator of several television networks and a movie studio, whose copyrighted content was cited in nearly 1 million removal requests during the same period.

The data doesn't identify the specifics of the reported infringements, but Microsoft Corp. confirmed virtually all of its complaints are about websites offering bogus versions of its Windows operating system and other software.

"Each month, Microsoft requests the removal of links to web pages that infringe Microsoft's copyrights so that customers are not deceived into purchasing or downloading counterfeit software," company spokesman Lou Gellos wrote in an email.

Copyright-protected content owned by major music labels also spurred a high volume of removal requests.

The Recording Industry Association of America, which has railed against digital piracy since the rise and fall of Napster's music-sharing service more than a decade ago, was identified as the copyright owner in more than 416,000 requests. Other copyright owners on Google's Top 10 list of removal requests include Universal Music and Sony Music and an adult entertainment site, BangBros.com.

Google decided to share its insights on copyright abuse amid a rising outcry for a crackdown against online piracy that media companies have claimed is collectively costing them billions of dollars each year. The backlash inspired a piece of get-tougher legislation dubbed the Stop Online Piracy Act, or SOPA, that had the backing of most major music and move studios. The proposal caused dismay among major Internet companies who feared the law would stifle free speech and innovation. The bill was abandoned four months ago after fierce high-tech opposition that included a one-day blackout of popular websites such as Wikipedia and an online petition drive spearheaded by Google.

Microsoft also opposed SOPA, although it wasn't as strident in its criticism as other major technology companies. The Business Software Alliance, a group that includes Microsoft, initially supported SOPA before reversing its position as the backlash to the proposal intensified.

Online infringements in the U.S. are currently covered by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which requires the content owner to police sites for violations and then send requests to take down the material. Websites are required to respond promptly.

Google says it now responds to requests within 11 hours, despite a rising volume of complaints. It sometimes receives more than 250,000 removal requests in a week, exceeding the total number sent to the company during the entire year of 2009. In the past month alone, Google received 1.2 million removal requests on behalf of 1,000 copyright owners who believe their content was being infringed upon at nearly 23,000 different websites, according to a blog post Thursday by Fred von Lohmann, the company's senior copyright lawyer.

In an interview Thursday, von Lohmann attributed the increased number of complaints to more sophisticated tracking technology that has enabled copyright owners to pinpoint violations more quickly than in the past.

The websites most frequently targeted in the copyright complaints sent to Google were filestube.com (nearly 390,000 links requested for removal), torrentz.eu (more than 147,000 links) and 4shared.com (more than 132,000 links).

Google's new report doesn't include copyright removal requests sent to its popular video site, YouTube, or its Blogger service. But Google's search engine receives the most copyright complaints, accounting for about 60 percent of the 5.4 million removal requests the company processed last year, von Lohmann said.

Samsung, Apple Says No Compromise

The widely anticipated two-day meeting between chief executives of Samsung and Apple yielded no agreement between the parties mired in a hot legal dispute over copyright infringements.

Samsung CEO Choi Gee-sung and Shin Jong-kyun, head of the firm s mobile division, left Seoul Sunday for the United States to meet Apple CEO Tim Cook by order of the Northern District Court of California, in an attempt to settle the patent fight without going into costly legal proceedings.

The two technology giants could find no clear agreement through the talks, a source said. Apple Korea declined to comment on the matter.

The patent battle is now headed for trial in July, despite both firm s stated wish to avoid legal proceedings.

According to foreign media outlets, both technology giants held firm on their assertions: Samsung continued to demand Apple pay royalties for using its wireless transmission technology and Apple insisted that Samsung copied its design in various products.

Earlier this month, both sides showed some willingness to lessen the tension by cutting the number of disputed patents in half following a suggestion by the court.

Prior to the talks, Shin had strongly denied copying any designs on the part of Samsung, calling Apple s allegations preposterous to reporters at Gimpo International Airport on Sunday. However, he also commented that Samsung was willing to offer a variety of solutions to the royalty dispute and mentioned cross licensing. Samsung has maintained it has no plans to sign a cross licensing contract before Shin s comments. Choi avoided speaking to reporters at the airport.

As the meeting was not initiated by either party, patent experts and officials here say it was highly unlikely that the dispute would end amiably.

The dispute started in April last year when Apple sued Samsung for copying the look and feel of the iPhone for the Korean company s hot-selling Galaxy smartphones. Samsung countersued Apple for not paying royalties for using its wireless transmission technology.

Since then, the number of patents in dispute has skyrocketed along with courts of different countries involved. Samsung has requested Apple pay 2.4 percent for each chip in royalties, citing Apple s violation of FRAND (fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory) practices, and blamed the American firm for delaying negotiations.

However, Apple is also the biggest buyer of Samsung chips, with the California-based company having agreed to buy $11 billion worth of LCD screens, memory chips and other components through 2012.

Last year, Samsung rose to become the biggest smartphone maker in the world, forcing Nokia to cede the top spot. Apple was superior in sales and profits to Samsung throughout last year, but were behind in the first quarter of this year, according to market analysts. According to International Data Corporation, Samsung holds 29.1 percent of the market share in smartphones, while Apple has 24.2 percent.

Choi and Shin are inspecting Samsung s operations in the United States and will return at an unspecified date, a Samsung official said.

Microsoft Sees ’Rebirth’ with New Windows 8 System

Microsoft’s upcoming Windows 8 series - featuring an upgraded cloud computing service - marks a "rebirth" of its operating systems, chief executive Steve Ballmer said on Tuesday.

Ballmer described Windows 8 as the "deepest, broadest and most impactful" Windows software ever created by the US tech giant, after the current Windows 7 sold at unprecedented rates to businesses.

"It’s really, in some senses, a dawning of the rebirth of MS Windows... It’s certainly the most important piece of work we’ve done," he said in a speech to the Seoul Digital Forum.

Windows 8, whose preview version will be released in June, allows users readily to store and share personal data among various devices under the "SkyDrive" cloud computing service. Rival Apple already offers such a service.

The new Microsoft system will support a wider range of devices, including touch- and stylus-based smartphones and tablet PCs as well as desktop and laptop machines, Ballmer said.

The software giant has been trying to expand its presence in the booming software market for smartphones and tablets, which is currently dominated by Apple and Google.

Ballmer predicted that the cloud computing market would become dominated by a few big players.

"The number of core (cloud) platforms, around which software developers will do their innovation, is not ever-broadening," he said.

"It’s really a quite smaller and focused number - Windows, various forms of Linux, the Apple ecosystem."

In three to five years from now, "there will be just a few ecosystems that really can get the critical mass", he said.

Ballmer estimated up to 500 million users will have Windows 8 next year, promising the "best economic opportunity" for device makers and app developers who adopt the new system.

Microsoft will also soon introduce Skype powered by Windows 8, Ballmer said. His company last year bought the leading Internet video and voice-calling service for $8.5 billion.

Google Funds Computer Teachers and Raspberry Pis in England

Dozens of teachers specialising in computer science are to work in English schools thanks to a partnership between Google and the charity Teach First.

Google’s chairman Eric Schmidt said money would also be provided to buy "teaching aids, such as Raspberry Pi’s or Arduino starter kits".

He said that without investment in the subject, the UK risked "losing a generation" of scientists.

Mr Schmidt had previously criticised the country’s ICT curriculum.

He had said the UK was "throwing away [its] great computing heritage" by focusing on using software rather than how it was made.

The comments, delivered last August at the Edinburgh International Television Festival, prompted education secretary Michael Gove to revamp the curriculum to incorporate programming and other tech skills.

Speaking on Wednesday at London’s Science Museum, Mr Schmidt outlined further plans: "Put simply, technology breakthroughs can’t happen without the scientists and engineers to make them. The challenge that society faces is to equip enough people, with the right skills and mindset, and to get them to work on the most important problems."

Despite acknowledging progress, he described computer science education in the UK as still being in a "sorry state".

He announced that Google would provide the funds to support Teach First - a charity which puts "exceptional" graduates on a six-week training programme before deploying them to schools where they teach classes over a two-year period.

Many stay on beyond that term while others pursue places at leading businesses associated with the programme.

At present the scheme is limited to seven regions of England: East Midlands; Kent and Medway; London; North East; North West; West Midlands; and Yorkshire and Humber.

Mr Schmidt said the donation would be used to train "more than 100 first rate science teachers over the next three years, with the majority focused on computer science".

He said that he hoped up to 20,000 students would benefit in "disadvantaged communities".

"It’s vital to expose kids to this early if they’re to have the chance of a career in computing," Mr Schmidt added.

"Only 2% of Google engineers say they weren’t exposed to computer science at high school.

"While not every child is going to become a programmer, those with aptitude shouldn’t be denied the chance."

Each of the 100 teachers will have a small bursary to buy equipment relating to their teaching. The Raspberry Pi, a low-cost computer designed in the UK, will be used in the scheme.

"The success of the BBC Micro in the 1980s shows what’s possible. There’s no reason why Raspberry Pi shouldn’t have the same impact, with the right support," Mr Schmidt said.

Google has also sponsored a new exhibition at London’s Science Museum showcasing the life and career of Alan Turing.

It is due to open next month to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the computer pioneer’s birth.

In 2014, the museum will open a new gallery, also funded by Google, showcasing modern communications.

Mr Schmidt said he hopes such exhibits can equate to an image change for engineering.

"Rebooting computer science education is not straightforward.

"Scrapping the existing curriculum was a good first step - the equivalent of pulling the plug out of the wall. The question is now how to power up."

Data Storage: IBM Marks 60 Years of Magnetic Tape Innovation

This year marks the 60th anniversary of IBM’s magnetic tape innovation that solved the brittle tape dilemma and catapulted data storage from paper punch cards into the era of modern computing. On May 15, IBM announced that AlphaTV, a leading television network in Greece, has overhauled its storage infrastructure with IBM high-performance, high-capacity tape solutions for greater efficiencies, faster access to video and the ability to store more video in dramatically less space. AlphaTV has been broadcasting since 1996, creating and storing all forms

of video entertainment, from soap operas and documentaries, to movies and sporting events, and creating a vast video archive along the way. Initially, AlphaTV archived its programming on Sony Beta SP format video cassettes that stored up to 90 minutes of content. Not long after, in need of storage that offered greater density, it turned to DVCPRO format videos that stored up to 120 minutes. But even that format was not allowing the network to keep pace with its ballooning archive, a storage infrastructure that by 2011 spanned more than 1,507 square feet. To get greater control of this infrastructure, AlphaTV turned to IBM and its Linear Tape File System (LTFS) and IBM Linear Tape-Open (LTO) Ultrium 5 tape drives, which can store up to 3 terabytes, with 2:1 compression in a single cartridge. With this solution, AlphaTV has been able to store more content in far less space. Greece s AlphaTV is but one example of the many organizations that use IBM s storage tape technology. However, it took six decades to get to this point. To chronicle how IBM developed and then refined its tape storage technology, eWEEK first turns the clock back to 1952, when Big Blue developed the IBM 726, which solved several problems businesses faced when storing their data.

Visual Studio 11 Express Editions Metro-Only

For Microsoft, the traditional desktop is old news. It’s on its way out, it’s legacy, and the harder they claim the desktop has equal rights, the sillier it becomes. With companies, words are meaningless, it’s actions that matter, and here Microsoft’s actions tell the real story. The company has announced the product line-up for Visual Studio 11, and the free Express can no longer be used to create desktop applications. Message is clear.

Other than the structure of Windows 8 itself - focus on Metro, desktop as an isolated application - this is probably the biggest plain clue yet that yes, people, the desktop is windows 8’s Classic. It’s there now because Windows 8 is a transitory release, and like the first versions of Mac OS X, users will still need the ’old’ applications. Metro is the future, and the only thing Microsoft really cares about.

The product line up for Visual Studio 11 confirms this. Like before, the line up is split between Visual Studio Express editions, which are free, and Visual Studio Professional and Ultimate editions, which are not. Starting with Visual Studio 11, the free Express editions can no longer be used to develop desktop applications. In order to write desktop applications, you’re going to need to move to one of the paid editions, starting at $499 retail, or $1199 (renewal $799 per year) if you want an MSDN subscription with your purchase.

The message is clear: investing in the desktop is pointless. Microsoft wants to push people towards developing for Metro, abandoning the desktop in the process. Normally, I would applaud such a move (Microsoft has been notoriously bad at getting developers to use new stuff), but in the case of Metro, the situation is different. Metro and its applications are effectively toys compared to traditional desktop applications, so pushing developers towards something that is barely 25% as powerful and functional as what it is supposed to replace doesn’t look like a good idea.

It’s a shame really. Metro is really fun. Just not for people who do more than check the weather and read Twitter.

HP s WebOS Team May Join Google

HP s open source webOS team, known as Enyo, will reportedly be leaving the company and joining Google, according to The Verge. The computer giant in December announced its failed webOS mobile operating system would move to an open-source model under the name Enyo, with version 1.0 slated for release in September 2012. The website s sources claim the entire Enyo team will not be headed for Google, but Matt McNulty, the head of the project, will be among those departing. This wouldn t be the first time the Internet giant has hired former webOS workers; Android s current design chief Matias Duarte oversaw the creation of the user interface for the operating system while working at Palm. It is unclear if the Enyo team members will be joining the Android group or another Google project.

Half Of PC Users Are Pirates, Says Study

One in four UK computer users have installed unlicensed software, says BSA
On May 21, 2012 by Max Smolaks 6

Over half of PC users worldwide have admitted to using pirate software last year, according to a study by the trade group Business Software Alliance (BSA).

BSA s ninth annual Global Software Piracy Study has shown a sharp increase in software piracy, especially among emerging economies. In the UK, more than one in four programs users installed in 2011 were unlicensed.
Flying the Jolly Roger

In a survey of around 15,000 computer users from a total of 33 countries around the world, 57 percent admitted to using pirated software, up from 42 percent the year before. The BSA estimates that the global annual cost of software piracy has reached $63.4 billion (£40b).

UK is firmly below the global average, with just 27 percent of computer users admitting they have acquired software illegally last year. This translates into an approximate £1.2 billion loss by the software industry.

According to the study, young men are much more likely to use unlicensed software than any other demographic. 28 percent of professed software pirates in the UK are under 34 years old, and 79 percent are male.

As the UK enters a double-dip recession, it has never been more important to protect the creative industry s intellectual property and its vital contribution to the economy. However, to do so we need to fundamentally change the way we view and acquire software, says Julian Swan, director of compliance marketing at BSA EMEA.

The study discovered that more than three quarters (77 percent) of UK PC users surveyed do not think the risk of getting caught is an effective deterrent to software piracy.

According to the UK law, the maximum amount of damages the software developers can claim is equivalent to the cost of the software license. The BSA is calling for a stronger damages law, including double damages,

to stop the increase in illegal software use.

The study has also found that computer users in emerging markets are more likely to use pirated software than in mature ones 68 percent against 24 percent respectively.

By its sheer scale, China has the most troubling piracy problem. Its illegal software market was worth nearly £5.5 billion in 2011 versus a legal market of less than £1.7 billion.

Walking the plank

According to BSA, on average only 20 percent of software pirates consider current enforcement measures a sufficient deterrent to their activities.

It is clear that the fight against software piracy is far from over. Although emerging markets are of the greatest concern, the problem is still persisting in mature markets, in which one in four admit to using pirated software. One of the more troubling issues is that business decision makers purchase some legitimate copies but then turn a blind eye to further (illegal) installations for new users, locations and devices, said Robin Fry, commercial services partner at DAC Beachcroft.

Although, the legal framework currently in place in the UK generally serves the software industry well, readily accessible enforcement could be improved. As an organisation we endeavour to assist our members in protecting their products and take to task those who illicitly seek to exploit them. However, the existing legislative process can be unduly wieldy so much so that many businesses, and enforcement agencies, are put off, commented Julian Heathcote Hobbins, general counsel at Federation Against Software Theft.

It is all very well having the IP rights in place, but unless we can improve the practical enforcement measures, the effectiveness of the laws will be blunted, he added.

We should note that the previous BSA reports have been criticised by some members of the industry as propaganda .

BSA has recently exercised its power by working out a settlement worth £10,000 with the Blackpool-based company George Morrison over its illegal use of Microsoft and Autodesk products.

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